



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Great Government Through the General Management System – Quality, Timeliness, Value
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

CLASS SPECIFICATION

CLASSIFIED

DEPUTY COUNTY COUNSEL

Class No. 003903

SENIOR DEPUTY COUNTY COUNSEL

Class No. 003904

■ CLASSIFICATION PURPOSE

To perform legal work in the field of local government law; to provide professional legal services to County departments, boards and commissions, school districts or special districts; and to perform related work as required.

■ DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

These classes are distinguished as being attorneys allocated only to the Office of County Counsel.

Deputy County Counsel:

This is the entry-level class of the Deputy County Counsel series. Under general supervision, incumbents are responsible for rendering professional legal services on behalf of the county and performing legal assignments varying from simple to moderate difficulty and complexity. As experience is gained, incumbents are assigned work of greater difficulty under a lesser degree of supervision.

Senior Deputy County Counsel:

Depending on assignment, positions in this class are assigned to perform journey, lead, or supervisory functions. Under direction, incumbents are responsible for independently handling cases and assignments that vary in difficulty and complexity from moderate to difficult; and handling cases and matters that have the greatest potential impact upon the County and its officers, boards and districts. Incumbents may also supervise a section or team of attorneys. Senior Deputy County Counsel differs from the next highest level, Chief Deputy County Counsel, in that the latter class has overall administrative authority and responsibility for a legal group or division.

■ FUNCTIONS

The examples of functions listed in the class specifications are representative but not necessarily exhaustive or descriptive of any one position in the classes. Management is not precluded from assigning other related functions not listed herein if such duties are a logical assignment for the position.

Deputy County Counsel

Essential Functions:

1. Acts as a legal advisor for County departments, boards and commissions, school districts, or special districts as assigned by County Counsel.
2. May prosecute and defend civil and administrative actions on behalf of officers and employees of assigned County departments or districts.
3. Performs legal research on all aspects of local government law.
4. Prepares and renders verbal or written opinions concerning department powers, functions, jurisdiction, authority, procedures, and matters of civil law.
5. Drafts memoranda, correspondence, ordinances, resolutions, and contracts.
6. Acts as legal advisor and represents County departments or districts on a variety of legal issues.
7. May assist clients in drafting proposed legislation.
8. May handle civil cases from trial through appeal.

9. May prepare and try juvenile dependency cases; may represent the Health and Human Service Agency (HHSA) in advocating for best interest of children through court proceedings to determine placement, custody, and other matters.
10. Provides responsive, high quality service to County employees, representatives of outside agencies and members of the public by providing accurate, complete and up-to-date information in a courteous, efficient and timely manner.

Senior Deputy County Counsel:

Essential Functions:

All of the functions listed above and:

1. Provides guidance and advice to Deputy and Senior Deputy County Counsel attorneys in matters of law and trial tactics, ordinance drafting and interpretation, legal research, preparation of legal briefs and opinions, and trial and appellate practices.
2. May act as a lead or supervising attorney over an assigned section or team of attorneys and other professional staff.

■ KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

Knowledge of:

The following apply to both classes:

- Legal principles, legal research, and trial techniques.
- State and Federal statutory and case law applicable to public entities in California.
- Rules and procedures for California and Federal Courts.
- San Diego County Charter, Code of Regulator Ordinances, Administrative Code, and related authorities.
- Telephone, office, and online etiquette.
- County customer service objectives and strategies.
- Basic computer operation and software programs such as legal research, word processing, and electronic mail.

Senior Deputy County Counsel (in addition to the above):

- Principles, practices, methods, and techniques of leadership, supervision, and training.
- The General Management System in principle and in practice.

Skills and Abilities to:

The following apply to both classes:

- Read, understand, interpret and communicate legal issues to both attorneys and lay people.
- Advocate the interests of the county and other clients in meetings, court and administrative hearings.
- Thoroughly analyze and research legal issues and take all facts and findings into consideration.
- Interpret and apply cases, statutes, regulations, legal principles, and government policies and practices.
- Prioritize and organize workload and complete a large number of work assignments that have strict timelines.
- Communicate effectively in writing, in a clear, concise, sound, logical, and thorough manner when preparing opinions, briefs, reports, correspondence, or other written communications of a legal nature.
- Communicate effectively with a variety of individuals representing diverse cultures and backgrounds and function calmly in stressful situations, which require a high degree of sensitivity, tact and diplomacy.
- Treat County employees, representatives of outside agencies, and members of the public with courtesy and respect.
- Assess the customer's immediate needs and ensure customer's receipt of needed services through personal service or referral.
- Provide prompt, efficient and responsive service.
- Exercise appropriate judgment in answering questions and releasing information; analyze and project consequences of decisions and/or recommendations.

Senior Deputy County Counsel (in addition to the above):

- Analyze, research, and resolve difficult and complex legal problems.
- Prepare, present, and manage moderately difficult to complex trial and appellate cases under minimal to moderate supervision.
- Lead or supervise the work of a section or team of attorneys and/or other staff.

■ EDUCATION/EXPERIENCE

Education, training, and/or experience that demonstrate possession of the knowledge, skills and abilities listed above. Examples of qualifying education/experience are listed below.

Deputy County Counsel:

Active membership in good standing with the State Bar of California.

Senior Deputy County Counsel:

Active membership in good standing with the State Bar of California, AND three (3) years of professional, post-bar civil legal experience as an attorney. Previous experience must have included serving as an attorney handling civil law matters and cases in a public or private sector law office.

Desirable Qualifications:

Experience with a public entity representing public boards and commissions, preparing and trying public entity lawsuits, and drafting ordinances and public contracts.

■ ESSENTIAL PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The physical characteristics described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the classifications. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable an individual with qualified disabilities to perform the essential functions of a job, on a case-by-case basis.

Continuous upward and downward flexion of the neck. Frequent: sitting, bending and twisting of the waist, and repetitive use of hands to operate computers, printers, copiers, and telephones. Occasional: walking, standing, bending and twisting of waist, using both hands to perform simple grasping and pushing and pulling; reaching above and below shoulder level, and lifting and carrying office items weighing up to 10 pounds.

■ SPECIAL NOTES, LICENSES, OR REQUIREMENTS

Licenses

Active membership and in good standing with the State Bar of California.

A valid California class C driver's license, which must be maintained throughout employment in this class, is required at time of appointment, or the ability to arrange necessary and timely transportation for travel. Employees in this class may be required to use their own vehicle.

Certification/Registration

None required.

Working Conditions

The primary work place is an office environment. Work involves frequent exposure to computer screens. Work occasionally involves travel to locations within and outside of the county.

Background Investigation

Must have a reputation for honesty and trustworthiness. Misdemeanor and/or felony convictions may be disqualifying depending on type, number, severity, and recency. Prior to appointment, candidates will be subject to a background investigation.

Probationary Period

Incumbents appointed to permanent positions in these classes shall serve a probationary period of 12 months (Civil Service Rule 4.2.5).

New: August 14, 1998 (Class Nos. 003903 and 003904)

Reviewed: Spring 2003

Revised: June 15, 2004

Revised: October 6, 2004

Deputy County Counsel (Class No. 003903)

Senior Deputy County Counsel (Class No. 003904)

Union Code: CC

Union Code: CS

Variable Entry: Y

Variable Entry: Y